



AETC News Clips

Altus AFB, Okla.



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Altus AFB saves money with energy retrofit project

By Maj. Dawn Davis

Operations Flight commander

Bron Howard remembers the old days of fluorescent lighting at Altus Air Force Base. "We were literally in the dark," the Altus energy manager said.

That was before an energy retrofit replaced the lighting systems in 93 of the buildings on base with efficient, high-output T5 fluorescent lighting. It is one of many energy conservation measures expected to save the Air Force \$6.5 million in energy costs over the next 15 years.

To improve energy efficiency and comfort for the nearly 5,000 troops and civilians it serves, Altus chose Honeywell in March 2005 to implement a \$3.7 million energy savings performance contract.

Honeywell will complete the work early this year. The energy savings that result from the infrastructure upgrades are expected to pay for the program over the next few years.

Honeywell guarantees the savings and will make up the difference if the results are not met. So the improvements should not raise budgets or require additional taxpayer dollars.

"We left no stone unturned when it came to identifying savings opportunities," Howard said. "The money saved through the contract will help us make the improvements without affecting the operating budget.

"It's really a win-win for those on the base and the surrounding community," he said.

The Altus Times

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Work planned under the ESPC includes lighting, air conditioning, building control and water conservation upgrades, and will impact more than 100 buildings here. The energy savings from these improvements should allow the base to mitigate budget concerns.

In addition, the contract is helping the base meet energy efficiency goals mandated by Executive Order 13123, which requires federal agencies to reduce energy use 35 percent from 1985 levels by 2010.

To further reduce the base's operating costs, the ESPC includes critical building and utility systems upgrades. Honeywell replaced a major high maintenance chilled water system with a more efficient chiller. The new chiller is expected to last longer and require minimal maintenance.

With the new management system, operators can remotely control and monitor HVAC and energy management technology. The system is expected to improve overall temperature control.

It allows operators to set back temperatures when the buildings are not in use, reducing energy and equipment run time, and extending the life of the equipment.

"With the integrated system, we can see issues as they arise," Howard said. "This allows us to quickly respond to and solve problems before they become major repair issues."

The project also includes significant water conservation measures. To reduce water consumption, Altus replaced toilets, flush valves and aerators with low-flow equipment and redesigned the irrigation system at the base golf course.

With the project work wrapping up in early 2006, the base is on track to meet its energy goals 6 a tall order in the face of funding challenges and strict energy mandates, according to Howard.



AETC News Clips

Luke AFB, Ariz.



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Luke gives airmen a taste of life in a combat zone

David Madrid

The Arizona Republic
Feb. 28, 2006 12:00 AM

LUKE AIR FORCE BASE - Today's Air Force is different from yesterday's. Young men and women who would never have been thrust into a combat situation are now facing exactly that scenario.

It's the nature of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that the front lines are wherever the troops are, including support personnel who normally wouldn't be exposed to enemy fire or ambushes.

That is why Luke Air Force Base is developing its Expeditionary Thunderbolt Training Program to give airmen a feel for deployment in a combat zone.

"What we've tried to do is give them the skills that we think will be fundamental to their first five to 10 days in country. They can adjust and can actually get some more hands-on exposure so that when they show up, they're not overwhelmed," said Brig. Gen. Robin Rand, Luke's commander. "I call it trying to get rid of the 'sticker shock.' "

Rand expanded the program so that the training takes place at Gila Bend Auxiliary Airfield near Gila Bend southwest of the Valley.

"It is such a great location because it really replicates some of the austere locations that many of our airmen, Marines and soldiers are living in and deployed to right now," Rand said of the desert conditions similar to those of the Middle East.

Rand's vision of the program extends beyond just training Luke personnel. He says he would like to see Gila Bend Auxiliary Airfield become the hub of this training for other Air Education and Training Command bases.

Lt. Col. Dennis Malfer, 41, operations officer for the 62nd Fighter Squadron, recently participated in the one-week training as the detachment commander for three days.

Typically, Luke's F-16 pilots take off from the auxiliary field and head south to train on the Barry M. Goldwater Range. When the pilots returned to the auxiliary field this time, though, the luxuries of home weren't there, Malfer said.

"Instead of showing up at your nice building with all your computers and big screens and all your stuff, now you've got little screens and little deployable stuff, which is stuff you take with you to Iraq," he said.

The program gives airmen and pilots a taste of what it is like to be one of the combat forces. It puts them in a wartime mind-set, Malfer said.

"We're at war, so we have to train these guys that the minute they graduate from here, the minute they leave, they have to be ready to go to war," he said.

<http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/local/articles/0228wvgilabend0228.html>

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NM range is cleaned after airman dies of hantavirus

By Chris Roberts

El Paso Times

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

After a hantavirus death of a service member at Beaumont Army Medical Center, workers continued their cleanup of structures on a New Mexico range Monday and Beaumont officials said there are no additional confirmed cases of hantavirus — although a few complaining of similar symptoms are being tested.

Beaumont officials have refused to release the name or unit of the service member who recently died of the disease, saying only that the victim was on temporary assignment to Fort Bliss at the time of the death.

An official who asked not to be identified said that Senior Airman Leonard Hankerson Jr., with the 56th Security Forces Squadron at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz., died of hantavirus-related problems at Beaumont on Feb. 11.

Hankerson, who was temporarily stationed at Fort Bliss, was training at McGregor Range. About 613 soldiers, 226 airmen and 260 support personnel are training at McGregor Range, said Fort Bliss spokeswoman Jean Offutt. McGregor is where the service person who died was stationed, Offutt said.

Health officials were using a chlorine solution to scrub the inside of all the buildings in the McGregor complex, and in the next few days they will begin cleaning buildings at the Doña Ana Range, she said.

Although the illness is relatively rare, more than a third of the reported cases have proven fatal, the victims dying of hantavirus pulmonary syndrome. Early symptoms are flu-like and include fever, fatigue and severe muscle aches.

A few other service members have complained of similar symptoms, said Lt. Col. Gunther Hsue, Beaumont chief of infectious diseases.

“The initial symptoms are very similar to any other viral condition,” Hsue said. “We’re running tests (on a few service members) more on a precautionary basis.”

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Greg Goff, whose stepson is an airman stationed at Colorado Springs, Colo., said his son was in the barracks next to the barracks where the airman who died was staying. Goff said his son talked of holes in the roof that let rain in and the general disrepair of the buildings.

"These things should have been (bull)dozed," Goff said.

When Goff contacted Beaumont to check on his son, he was told by an official that there were three men under observation for hantavirus symptoms and his son was not one of them.

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<http://www.borderlandnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060228/NEWS/60227038/1001>

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Zealous land protection efforts threaten legitimate planning

Opinion

Feb. 28, 2006 12:00 AM

Municipal governments were heartened by the U.S. Supreme Court decision last June supporting freewheeling cities that saw gold in land "owned" by their citizens.

Be careful what you wish for? They had no idea.

From coast to coast today, the nation is ablaze with a reformist zeal to foil the use of eminent domain by local governments.

Some reforms focus on the essence of the court's *Kelo vs. City of New London, Conn.* decision, which effectively blessed cities that wished to grab privately owned land for other private uses. Like the expansion of a pharmaceutical company's headquarters, which in New London was inconveniently blocked by homeowners who rather liked their homes where they were.

But reform efforts have not stopped there. In Arizona, as many as 20 bills at the Legislature would tighten the ability of municipalities to use eminent domain to condemn property. And at least one national property rights group, the Institute for Justice, has helped local activists prepare an initiative for the fall ballot.

Much of the proposed property law would do far more than merely right the wrongs perpetrated by *Kelo*. Some of the proposals effectively will throttle the ability of cities to make zoning changes altogether, strangling their capacity to adapt to the enormous pressures of growth. Some of it very well may constitute a death sentence for municipal planning.

The most volatile issue at play is the question of property value. Several bills before the Legislature would codify what a government must pay to a landowner whose property is condemned, in one case setting that price at 125 percent of fair-market value. Other states, including Michigan, may have similar measures on the November ballot.

Other changes being weighed in Arizona would enhance a property owner's right to recover financially if a city's zoning decision had the effect of reducing the value of his property.

In their original form, two proposed ballot measures, House Concurrent Resolution 2031 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 1019, would permit property owners to seek compensation even if the city *fails* to make zoning changes that might improve the value of the private property.

Supporters of those measures are willing to pull back somewhat . . . a very good thing. Many of them have agreed to limit compensation only to the property owners directly involved in the zoning question, for example. Still, city officials remain fearful that the restrictions could harm the ability of cities to make zoning decisions that are important to the community as a whole.

The cities fear, for example, that approval of either resolution would make protecting Luke Air Force Base in Glendale from urban encroachment far more difficult by hiking property values beyond the ability of surrounding cities to pay. It could make desert preservation efforts such as Pima County's recent Sonoran Desert Conservation plan too expensive to implement. And it could adversely affect a city's interest in protecting historic neighborhoods if those protections include restrictions on what can be built.

Well intended as they may be, such changes in state law wield a nightmarish capacity to throw the operation of growing communities into a hyperexpensive chaos of legal challenges, particularly in our central cities, where rezoning is a vital tool for improvement.

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Americans have a justifiably fierce tradition of defending private-property rights, and state legislatures are right to act on their behalf.

But in their post-*Ke/o* flood of legislation, lawmakers are reaching well beyond merely defending against eminent-domain abuses.

Many of the Arizona bills deal with the question of compensation for private land that is acquired for public use, known as a regulatory "taking," which in many ways is a far more complex matter than whether the land should be acquired by a city at all.

Lawmakers need to remember whose pocket is being tapped when they act to drive up the cost of acquiring land for public use.

When they artificially set land prices at 125 percent of market value or assign land value according to its potential uses as opposed to current use, it is the taxpayer who must bear the burden of that conjecture.

Worst of all, it could severely curtail the ability of our growing cities to expand and evolve, to make the sort of decisions that voters want them to make.

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Rare virus death in military hits close to home

San Leandro native tells how soldiers played with dead mice, a known cause of the illness

By Jill Tucker, STAFF WRITER

The airmen thought the dead mice in their quarters at the Texas Army base were amusing.

They teased each other, according to one airman's account, dangling or tossing the tiny corpses for laughs and joking about the visible mouse droppings.

Until a fellow airman died on Feb. 11.

An autopsy found he died from the deadly and rare hantavirus — a disease transmitted through the urine, droppings or saliva of infected rodents.

The military reported the cause of death Friday, withholding the man's name for privacy reasons, and noting it was unclear where he contracted the virus.

A serviceman on base, communicating through a family member, confirmed the man was Leonard Hankerson Jr., a 24-year-old Arizona senior airman. Obituaries from earlier this month confirm Hankerson died while on temporary assignment at Fort Bliss near El Paso.

The cause of the airman's death shocked fellow service members at the base and their families.

One airman, a San Leandro native, called his mother over the weekend.

He told her he and his fellow airmen didn't know very much, except that additional service members were taken by ambulance to the hospital over the weekend and their status was unknown.

"He said it's just so weird because they're there and they know nothing," the mom added. "He said, 'Everybody's got a cold. We're all sick. We're all coughing.'"

Because the man is under orders not to discuss the situation, the mother did not want her or her son identified.

Clarence Davis III, a spokesman from the William Beaumont Army Medical Center where Hankerson died, said seven service members have been admitted to the center since Friday with "symptoms of viral illness."

So far, four have tested negative for hantavirus, with results pending for the three others.

The former San Leandro man also told his mother hazardous material teams sprayed bleach around the base over the weekend.

In the Friday statement, Fort Bliss officials confirmed they are taking "several precautions" to ensure safety, including

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cleaning buildings that house military troops.

The hantavirus was identified in 1993, when an outbreak occurred in the Four Corners area of the U.S. Since then, there have been 416 U.S. cases — about 20 to 30 per year, according to Abbigail Tumpey, spokeswoman for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The strain most commonly found in this country is often called Sin Nombre — or the No Name virus, carried by the deer mouse. More than a third of those who contract it die.

Common disinfectants can kill the hantavirus, but if particles disperse, they can be inhaled.

While the incubation period can last from a few days to several weeks, death is often swift. The Sin Nombre strain causes a "pulmonary syndrome" in which the blood vessels leak fluid into the lungs so the victim can't breathe.

Tumpey said her agency's goal is to educate people about the virus and how to prevent contracting it.

The San Leandro airman's mom said she was frustrated at the apparent lack of instruction given to troops about the disease when they arrived at the base. She was also bewildered at the dearth of information after the death, including whether any testing was done to determine whether the virus was found at the Fort Bliss base.

The woman's son told her Saturday that his whole unit is scared, "not knowing who else is going to come down sick or just die."

"He said they are trained to fight an enemy they can see, not some unknown illness," she added.

Her son started a 35-day training at Fort Bliss on Feb. 1. She said he is scheduled to deploy to Southern Iraq in mid-March for an expected six-month tour of duty, where his unit will guard a prison and conduct patrols.

The mother, a former San Leandro resident, said she already was worried about her son going off to war a second time, but she was prepared for that.

She wasn't prepared to worry about him while he was in Texas.

"I totally support the war on terror. I know they train my son, they equip them and prepare them for war," she said. "I never gave it a thought that my son would be in danger of dying on a U.S. Army base."

Contact Jill Tucker at jtucker@angnewspapers.com.

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Sheppard AFB, Texas



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Ruling doesn't worry leader

Civilian pay, personnel rules would help SAFB workers

By Michael Hines/Times Record News
March 1, 2006, Page 1B

A local union leader doesn't think a ruling Monday by a federal judge will stop the Department of Defense from pushing forward with new personnel and pay rules that could affect some civilian workers at Sheppard Air Force Base.

The National Security Personnel System, which provides new work rules for civil service and federal employees, would change pay rates, civilian deployment, schedules, overtime rotation and reductions in force.

But U.S. District Judge Emmet G. Sullivan ruled against parts of the overhaul that would let the Pentagon override some provisions of collective bargaining agreements and give administrators more flexibility to change workers' assignments.

The judge's decision, however, likely won't stop federal officials from trying to get the measure into law, said Mario Casillas, president of the American Federation of Government Employees Local 779, which represents some workers at Sheppard Air Force Base.

"They're not going to give up trying to get this thing passed," he said.

But Casillas said the judge's ruling was a good sign.

"It shows that the new system that is being suggested, that the way they're going about it, has been wrong all along," he said. "This affirms that there is a need for unions."

Sullivan ruled the proposed workplace rules would mean employees faced unfair disadvantage in appealing unfavorable personnel decisions.

Homeland Security officials have said they need the new rules to enhance their flexibility to respond to terrorist threats, and the Pentagon says they are necessary to make government jobs more competitive with similar private sector jobs.

Times Record News

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